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ABSTRACT

Policies and procedures for retrenchment used at Emporia State University, Kansas, are identified to serve as a model for other colleges and the universities. The procedures are as follows: When a formal, institution-wide program of retrenchment appears necessary, the president will inform the faculty senate when such action is to be initiated and the actions that necessitate it. If the faculty senate does not approve the president's decision, the president will inform the Kansas Board of Regents, and all three interests will meet to discuss the matter. The responsibility for the assignment of unclassified positions within the institution, and the documentation that is needed to make such assignments, are addressed. Criteria for withdrawing unclassified positions, or terminating members of the administrative and teaching faculty, include: the ability of the university to accomplish its stated mission and to continue the quality of its programs and services will be maintained in making such decisions; positions occupied by persons holding temporary appointments will be terminated first; the university will honor the continuing contractual relationship implied by tenure; and decisions will be made in relation to competence, availability of tenured faculty, affirmative action program, and length of service. When staff termination occurs, efforts that will be undertaken to ameliorate temporary weaknesses include: reassignment of tenured staff to other areas in which they are competent; and implementing fractional appointments. Criteria for terminating tenured staff and the details of procedures for retrenchment are covered. (SW)

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EDUCATIONAL RETRENCHMENT: A MODEL FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

By

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During the past ten years, enrollment in many colleges and universities has tended to decline or, at best, it has vacillated. This is particularly true with institutions which were formerly teachers colleges and which have now become multipurpose colleges or universities. Such conditions have caused institutions to develop formal procedures and policies for dealing with budget cuts and reductions in the number of faculty employed. Nothing is so unsettling to faculty as the perceived tenuousness of their jobs during these uncertain times in higher education.

Because Emporia State University experienced a dramatic decline in enrollment in the early 1970's, more than 100 faculty positions were lost from 1971-72 to 1972-73. This represented a 28 percent reduction in faculty positions and it included tenured as well as untenured personnel. Needless to say, this situation was a traumatic experience not only for those faculty who lost their jobs, but also for the remaining faculty who were left wondering what the future would hold for them.

Since 1972-73 the enrollment has vacillated at Emporia State University which resulted in increased positions some years and decreases at other times. Today, the enrollment has stabilized and long-range plans have been developed which will assist the faculty and administration to cope with any unexpected dramatic decline in the number of students who are enrolled. Included in the academic plan are policies and procedures for retrenchment which were formally adopted by the Faculty Senate and approved by the President.

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Since many institutions of higher education may in the future be faced with a need to reduce faculty positions, the policies and procedures for retrenchment used at Emporia State University can serve as a model to be considered by other colleges and universities. The salient points of Emporia State University's retrenchment document follow:

1. If it appears necessary to embark upon a formal, institution-wide program of retrenchment, the President shall inform the Faculty Senate when such action is to be initiated and the actions which necessitate it. The Faculty Senate shall be given the opportunity to recommend approval or disapproval of the President's action. If the Faculty Senate does not pprove of the President's decision, the President shall inform the Kansas Board of Regents of the action he plans to take. In such situations, the President and the Faculty Senate President shall meet with the Board of Regents to discuss the matter.
2. It is the ultimate responsibility of the President of the University to determine the number of unclassified positions assigned to, or withdrawn from, each of the administrative units within the University. He normally makes such decisions in consultation with the appropriate committees, academic deans, and administrative heads. Each academic dean or administrative head, in turn, is responsible for recommending the positions to be assigned to, or withdrawn from, each of the administrative units for which he is responsible, subject to the approval of the President. The academic dean or administrative head normally takes such action in consultation with the chairpersons and other appropriate faculty members.

   The assignment of unclassified positions within the institution takes cognizance of substantial increases or decreases in the numbers of

students enrolled in the various courses and programs of each academic school, department, division, etc. Likewise, fluctuations in work load in administrative offices and service agencies of the institution are considered when unclassified positions are assigned to, or withdrawn from, these units. Each administrative unit is expected to keep systematic records by which it can document its academic and administrative workload when considerations involving the assignment, or withdrawal, of positions are being made.

3. When it is necessary to withdraw unclassified positions and thus terminate members of the administrative and teaching faculty at ESU, the criteria to be considered follow in order of priority:

    3.1 The ability of the University to accomplish its stated mission and to continue the quality of its programs and services shall be maintained in making any determination regarding the assignment of unclassified personnel.

    3.2 Positions occupied by persons holding temporary appointments will be terminated first, along with unfunded or vacant positions and those used for graduate assistants.

    3.3 The University shall honor the continuing contractual relationship implied by tenure as recognized by the Kansas Board of Regents. Consequently, when it is decided that a reduction must take place in a given school, department, division, or other unit, non-tenured staff shall be released before tenured staff except in extraordinary circumstances where a serious distortion of the academic program would otherwise result.

3.4 When retrenchment decisions affect regular non-tenured members of the faculty or administrative staff, those decisions shall be made in accordance with the following sequence of considerations: competence; availability of tenured faculty; affirmative action program; and length of service.

4. Any temporary weakness in carrying out the mission and programs of the University due to the termination of non-tenured faculty or administrative staff should be ameliorated to the extent possible by the following actions and efforts:

4.1 Tenured faculty or administrative staff may be partially or wholly reassigned to other areas in which they have competency. Sabbaticals should be encouraged to develop new competencies.

4.2 The Deans of the various schools and other administrative heads must make genuine efforts to transfer tenured faculty members partially or wholly to other positions in which they can perform competently.

4.3 Because of the desire to maintain the integrity of tenure, areas with a higher percentage of untenured positions may be more vulnerable to retrenchment.

4.4 Proper planning concerning faculty turnover, attrition, and temporary or permanent adjustments in assignments is vital to the preservation of tenure and morale, and to the maintenance of the programs and mission of the University.

4.5 When in spite of all the above, choices must be made which involve members of the permanent administration and tenured teaching faculty, the following should apply:

4.5.1 No terminations should be made which would prevent any unit of the University from performing the tasks considered essential.

4.5.2 Terminations should not be based on the decreasing demand for the services of any unit over less than a three-year period.

4.5.3 Terminations within a given unit should ordinarily be made according to rank, and within rank according to years of service at ESU, except that preference may be given to the termination of senior faculty who will become eligible for retirement.

4.5.4 Termination should conform to the University's obligations to affirmative action guidelines.

4.5.5 A bona fide effort must be made to reduce administrative and other non-teaching faculty positions proportionately to teaching faculty positions.

4.6 A department, division or other comparable unit may propose a plan for fractional appointments as an alternative to the release of any faculty member. Such a plan may be recommended to the President only if all faculty members in that unit who are to participate have agreed to do so.

4.7 Positions added to the University after a period of retrenchment are to be assigned to units on the same basis as other new positions with the following exceptions:

4.7.1 Special consideration will be given to units which have released tenured faculty members.

4.7.2 Former faculty members who held tenure shall be offered such positions, when qualified.

4.7.3 Once a unit is granted permission to recruit to fill a new or vacated position, the University shall formally invite all former tenured faculty members who can be contacted to apply for the position.

4.7.4 So long as there remain any tenured faculty who were released under a program of retrenchment, the University shall follow the above procedures each time it allocates a new position or seeks to fill a vacated position.

5. If it is necessary to embark upon a formal, institution-wide program of retrenchment, the following retrenchment procedures shall be observed:

5.1 The President shall present to the University Retrenchment Committee his proposed program for retrenchment. His program shall include the following:

5.1.1 the number of positions to be eliminated from the administrative staff of the University and from each of the academic schools;

5.1.2 the calendar to be followed in processing the cutbacks; and

5.1.3 such other information as is necessary for the committee to make a responsible review of the plan.

5.2 The University Retrenchment Committee shall submit in writing to the President any recommendations it may have regarding the proposed retrenchment program.

5.3 The President shall respond in writing to the University Retrenchment Committee's recommendations, stating his acceptance or rejection and his reasons.

5.4 The President shall present to the administrative heads and the academic deans the University's retrenchment program and inform them how the program will specifically affect their respective schools and/or administrative units.

5.5 Each dean shall present to his School Retrenchment Committee his proposed plan for retrenchment. His program shall include the following:

5.5.1 the number of positions to be eliminated from each of the departments;

5.5.2 the calendar to be followed in processing the cutbacks; and

5.5.3 such other information as is necessary for the committee to make a responsible review of the plan.

5.6 Each School Retrenchment Committee shall submit in writing to its dean any recommendations it may have regarding its retrenchment plans.

5.7 Each dean shall respond in writing to his School Retrenchment Committee's recommendations, stating his acceptance or rejection and his reasons.

5.8 Each dean shall announce to his department chairpersons the number of positions to be eliminated in each department and the calendar to be followed in processing the cutbacks.

5.9 Each department chairperson shall do the following:

5.9.1 consult with the tenured faculty of his department, or a representative committee thereof, according to the procedures used in the making of recommendations for tenure;

5.9.2 notify in writing each individual involved of the intention to recommend him for termination, and inform him of the right to be heard before the department committee prior to the forwarding of a recommendation to the dean;

5.9.3 arrange for the provisionally terminated faculty member to be heard before the department committee if he so requests; and

5.9.4 finally, send to the dean a written statement of the department's recommendations, setting forth both the names of those individuals involved and the reasons pertaining to each recommendation.

5.10 Each dean shall do the following:

5.10.1 consult with his School Retrenchment Committee regarding the recommendations of the departments;

5.10.2 make such revisions in his retrenchment plans as may be necessary;

5.10.3 provide each faculty member whose position is to be terminated an opportunity to have his case reviewed by the School Retrenchment Committee if he requests it; and

5.10.4 submit his retrenchment plan to the President of the University.

5.11 The President of the University shall consult with the University Retrenchment Committee, review with the committee the plans of the various schools and administrative units, and solicit the committee's comments and criticisms. The

President shall then prepare the retrenchment program in its final form. The University Retrenchment Committee shall be given the opportunity to state in writing if it differs with the President's retrenchment program in any substantial way and the reasons for its disagreement.

5.12 Any individual affected by modifications in any committee's proposed retrenchment program has the same right to review at the proper level as those individuals who were affected by recommendations before modifications were made.

5.13 The President of the University shall respond in writing to the University Retrenchment Committee regarding its recommendations. If substantial differences remain between the position of the President of the University and that of the University Retrenchment Committee, the President of the University shall so inform the Board of Regents and advise the Board of the action which he plans to take on the matter. The President of the University shall invite the President of the Faculty Senate to be present at the meeting of the Board of Regents when the matter is discussed.

5.14 The President of the University shall formally announce to the Faculty Senate the Retrenchment Program of the University and shall proceed to implement the program in accordance with the Policies and Procedures for Retrenchment and other relevant operating procedures of the University.

Note: Readers may request from the author the detailed document titled Policies and Procedures for Retrenchment which was adopted by the Emporia State University Faculty Senate on September 6, 1977.